

by Jack d'Annibale - Communications Director

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Rep. Honda introduced the STEM Education Innovation Act of 2011 to champion science, technology, engineering and math education to train a cutting edge workforce that bolsters America's position as a global leader in innovation and industry.

Achieving the American Dream begins with a great education. The American public school system must be the equalizer of economic opportunity throughout the United States, elevating a child's creativity, skills and thought, allowing her to be a competitive player on the world scene.

As our nation's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce heads toward retirement, too few students are equipped to serve as the next generation of innovators. Programme for International Student Assessment comparisons in 2006 show American students ranking 21st out of 30 in science literacy, and 25th out of 30 in math literacy, among students from developed countries.

These numbers are a crisis. These numbers are an urgent call to action. Congressman Michael Honda (CA-15) is answering that call by introducing the STEM Education Innovation Act of 2011

"We must foster another age of boundless American ingenuity. We must bring back the America of the 1960s where we put men on the moon and founded what would eventually become the Internet," Rep. Honda said. "The STEM Act is what we need today to guarantee American innovation and greatness tomorrow. The STEM Act is how we inspire students today so they become the Sally Ride or Steve Jobs of tomorrow."

American students consistently display lower scores on most STEM-related assessments than their peers in countries across the world. The US National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that from 2004 to 2008, 41 percent of 17-year-olds do not have a basic understanding of medium-difficulty math procedures.

“For our nation to remain a leader in scientific advancement and technological innovation, we must equip and train the scientists and engineers of tomorrow,” Rep. Honda said. “This bill provides the education and skills necessary for students to compete in today’s global economy and to understand increasingly complex issues. We must provide students with the resources and curriculum they need to succeed.”

The crisis facing our country goes to the heart of our nation’s ability to win the global competitiveness race. The school children of America must take giant leaps toward innovation and creativity to push the boundaries of science, engineering, mathematics and technology research and study. Giant leaps toward good paying wages after obtaining an undergraduate degree in STEM related fields. Giant leaps toward a dynamic and creative workforce that will win the global competitiveness race.

Congressman Honda’s bill will:

- Create an Office of STEM Education in the Department of Education. The Assistant Secretary of STEM Education will integrate, coordinate and improve the Department's K-12 and higher education STEM educational efforts and regularly consult with stakeholders, research professionals, industry and businesses in STEM-related fields to ensure a competitive American workforce is being developed.

- Institute a State Consortium on STEM education to bring together a group of states to take the lead in shaping educational STEM best practices, in addition to developing strategies to increase participation of underrepresented populations in STEM disciplines

- Establish the Education Innovation Project, which will promote the development of transformational technologies for the classroom by providing grant funding to outside entities—including for-profit companies, foundations, nonprofits and institutions of higher learning—to develop educational technology innovations that will be paramount for STEM education and the greater educational community.

STEM Education is a right and a necessity. It is essential for the youth of America, so they can once again be competitive with their international peers and attain their share of the American Dream through good paying jobs and lifelong careers. It is essential so that American "Job Creators" will be able to find future employees with the right skill sets to meet their needs right here at home.